КОЛЛЕКТИВ АВТОРОВ

JOHN STUART MILL; HIS LIFE AND WORKS

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John Stuart Mill; His Life and Works / Twelve Sketches by Herbert Spencer, Henry Fawcett, Frederic Harrison, and Other Distinguished Authors:

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Herbert Spencer, Henry Fawcett, Frederic Harrison and Other Distinguished Authors John Stuart Mill; His Life and Works / Twelve Sketches by Herbert Spencer, Henry Fawcett, Frederic Harrison, and Other Distinguished Authors

I.
A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

John Stuart Mill was born on the 20th of May, 1806. "I am glad," wrote George Grote to him in 1865, with reference

to a forthcoming article on his "Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy," "to get an opportunity of saying what I think about your 'System of Logic' and 'Essay on Liberty,' but I am still more glad to get (or perhaps to *make*) an opportunity of saying something about your father. It has always rankled in my thoughts that so grand and powerful a mind as his left behind it such insufficient traces in the estimation of successors." That regret was natural. The grand and powerful mind of James Mill left very notable traces, however, in the philosophical literature of his country, and in the training of the son who was to carry on his work, and to be the most influential teacher in a new school of thought and action, by which society is likely to be revolutionized far more than it has been by any other agency since the period of Erasmus and Martin Luther. James Mill was something more than the disciple of Bentham and Ricardo. He was a profound and original philosopher, whose depth and breadth of study were all the more remarkable because his thoughts were developed and his knowledge was acquired mainly by his own exertions. He had been helped out of the humble life into which he had been born by Sir John Stuart, who assisted him to attend the lectures of Dugald Stewart and others at Edinburgh with a view to his becoming a minister in the Church of Scotland. Soon finding that calling distasteful to him, he had, in or near the year 1800, settled in London as a journalist, resolved by ephemeral work to earn enough money to maintain him and his family in humble ways while he spent his best energies in the more serious pursuits

to which he was devoted. His talents soon made him friends, and the greatest of these was Jeremy Bentham.

As erroneous opinions have been current as to the relations between Bentham and James Mill and have lately been repeated in more than one newspaper, it may be well here to call attention to the contradiction of them that was published by the son of the latter in "The Edinburgh Review" for 1844. "Mr. Mill and his family," we there read, "lived with Mr. Bentham for half of four years at Ford Abbey," – that is, between 1814 and 1817, – "and they passed small portions of previous summers with him at Barrow Green. His last visit to Barrow Green was of not more than a month's duration, and the previous ones all together did not extend to more than six months, or seven at most. The pecuniary benefit which Mr. Mill derived from his intimacy with Bentham consisted in this, – that he and his family lived with him as his guests, while he was in the country, periods amounting in all to about two years and a half. I have no reason to think that his hospitality was either given or accepted as pecuniary assistance, and I will add that the obligation was not exclusively on one side. Bentham was not then, as he was afterwards, surrounded by persons who courted his society, and were ever ready to volunteer their services, and, to a man of his secluded habits, it was no little advantage to have near him such a man as Mr. Mill, to whose advice and aid he habitually had recourse in all business transactions with the outward world of a troublesome or irksome nature. Such as the connection was, it was not of Mr. Mill's

seeking." On the same unquestionable authority we learn, that "Mr. Mill never in his life was in debt, and his income, whatever it might be, always covered his expenses." It is clear, that, from near the commencement of the present century, James Mill and Bentham lived for many years on terms of great intimacy, in which the poorer man was thoroughly independent, although it suited the other to make a fair return for the services rendered to him. A very characteristic letter is extant, dated 1814, in which James Mill proposes that the relations between him and his "dear friend and master" shall be to some extent altered, but only in order that their common objects may be the more fully served. "In reflecting," he says, "upon the duty which we owe to our principles, – to that system of important truths of which you have the immortal honor to be the author, but of which I am a most faithful and fervent disciple, and hitherto, I have fancied, my master's favorite disciple, – I have considered that there was nobody at all so likely to be your real successor as myself. Of talents it would be easy to find many superior. But, in the first place, I hardly know of anybody who has so completely taken up the principles, and is so thoroughly of the same way of thinking with yourself. In the next place, there are very few who have so much of the necessary previous discipline, my antecedent years having been wholly occupied in acquiring it. And, in the last place, I am pretty sure you cannot think of any other person whose whole life will be devoted to the propagation of the system." "There was during the last few years of Bentham's

life," said James Mill's son, "less frequency and cordiality of intercourse than in former years, chiefly because Bentham had acquired newer, and to him more agreeable intimacies, but Mr. Mill's feeling never altered towards him, nor did he ever fail, publicly or privately, in giving due honor to Bentham's name and acknowledgment of the intellectual debt he owed to him."

Those extracts are made, not only in justice to the memory of James Mill, but as a help towards understanding the influences by which his son was surrounded from his earliest years. James Mill was living in a house at Pentonville when this son was born, and partly because of the peculiar abilities that the boy displayed from the first, partly because he could not afford to procure for him elsewhere such teaching as he was able himself to give him, he took his education entirely into his own hands. With what interest – even jealous interest, it would seem – Bentham watched that education, appears from a pleasant little letter addressed to him by the elder Mill in 1812. "I am not going to die," he wrote, "notwithstanding your zeal to come in for a legacy. However, if I were to die any time before this poor boy is a man, one of the things that would pinch me most sorely would be the being obliged to leave his mind unmade to the degree of excellence of which I hope to make it. But another thing is, that the only prospect which would lessen that pain would be the leaving him in your hands. I therefore take your offer quite seriously, and stipulate merely that it shall be made as soon as possible; and then we may perhaps leave him a successor worthy

of both of us." It was a bold hope, but one destined to be fully realized. At the time of its utterance, the "poor boy" was barely more than six years old. The intellectual powers of which he gave such early proof were carefully, but apparently not excessively, cultivated. Mrs. Grote, in her lately-published "Personal Life of George Grote," has described him as he appeared in 1817, the year in which her husband made the acquaintance of his father. "John Stuart Mill, then a boy of about twelve years old," – he was really only eleven, – "was studying, with his father as sole preceptor, under the paternal roof. Unquestionably forward for his years, and already possessed of a competent knowledge of Greek and Latin, as well as of some subordinate though solid attainments, John was, as a boy, somewhat repressed by the elder Mill, and seldom took any share in the conversation carried on by the society frequenting the house." It is perhaps not strange that a boy of eleven, at any rate a boy who was to become so modest a man, should not take much part in general conversation; and Mr. Mill himself never, in referring to his father, led his hearers to suppose that he had, as a child, been in any way unduly repressed by him. The tender affection with which he always cherished his father's memory in no way sanctions the belief that he was at any time subjected to unreasonable discipline. By him his father was only revered as the best and kindest of teachers.

There was a break in the home teaching in 1820. James Mill, after bearing bravely with his early difficulties, had acquired so much renown by his famous "History of India," that, in spite of

its adverse criticisms of the East-India Company, the directors of the Company in 1817 honorably bestowed upon him a post in the India House, where he steadily and rapidly rose to a position which enabled him to pass the later years of his life in more comfort than had hitherto been within his reach. The new employment, however, interfered with his other occupation as instructor to his boy; and for this reason, as well probably as for others tending to his advancement, the lad was, in the summer of 1820, sent to France for a year and a half. For several months he lived in Paris, in the house of Jean Baptiste Say, the political economist. The rest of his time was passed in the company of Sir Samuel Bentham, Jeremy Bentham's brother. Early in 1822, before he was eighteen, he returned to London, soon to enter the India Office as a clerk in the department of which his father was chief. In that office he remained for five and thirty years, acquitting himself with great ability, and gradually rising to the most responsible position that could be there held by a subordinate.

But, though he was thus early started in life as a city clerk, his self-training and his education by his father were by no means abandoned. The ancient and modern languages, as well as the various branches of philosophy and philosophical thought in which he was afterwards to attain such eminence, were studied by him in the early mornings, under the guidance of his father, before going down to pass his days in the India Office. During the summer evenings, and on such holidays as he could get, he

began those pedestrian exploits for which he afterwards became famous, and in which his main pleasure appears to have consisted in collecting plants and flowers in aid of the botanical studies that were his favorite pastime, and something more than a pastime, all through his life. His first printed writings are said to have been on botany, in the shape of some articles contributed to a scientific journal while he was still in his teens, and it is probable, that, could they now be detected, we should find in other periodicals traces of his work, at nearly if not quite as early a period in other lines of study. That he worked early and with wonderful ability in at least one very deep line, appears from the fact that while he was still only a lad, Jeremy Bentham intrusted to him the preparation for the press, and the supplementary annotation, of his "Rationale of Judicial Evidence." That work, for which he was highly commended by its author, published in 1827, contains the first publicly acknowledged literary work of John Stuart Mill.

While he was producing that result of laborious study in a special and intricate subject, his education in all sorts of other ways was continued. In evidence of the versatility of his pursuits, the veteran author of a short and ungenerous memoir that was published in "The Times" of May the 10th contributes one interesting note. "It is within our personal knowledge," he says, "that he was an extraordinary youth when, in 1824, he took the lead at the London Debating Club in one of the most remarkable collections of 'spirits of the age' that ever congregated for intellectual gladiatorship, he being by two or three years the

junior of the clique. The rivalry was rather in knowledge and reasoning than in eloquence, mere declamation was discouraged; and subjects of paramount importance were conscientiously thought out." In evidence of his more general studies, we may here repeat a few sentences from an account, by an intimate friend of both these great men, of the life of Mr. Grote, which was published in our columns two years ago. "About this time a small society was formed for readings in philosophical subjects. The meetings took place at Mr. Grote's house in Threadneedle Street, on certain days from half past eight till ten in the morning, at which hour the members (all in official employment) had to repair to their respective avocations. The members were Grote, John Mill, Roebuck, William Ellice, William Henry Prescott, two brothers Whitmore, and George John Graham. The mentor of their studies was the elder Mr. Mill. The meetings were continued for two or three years. The readings embraced a small manual of logic, by Du Trieu, recommended by Mr. Mill, and reprinted for the purpose, Whately's Logic, Hobbes's Logic, and Hartley on Man, in Priestley's edition. The manner of proceeding was thorough. Each paragraph, on being read, was commented on by every one in turn, discussed and rediscussed, to the point of total exhaustion. In 1828 the meetings ceased; but they were resumed in 1830, upon Mill's 'Analysis of the Mind,' which was gone over in the same manner." These philosophical studies were not only of extreme advantage in strengthening and developing the merits of Mr. Mill and his friends, nearly all of whom were

considerably older than he was, they also served to unite the friends in close and lasting intimacy of the most refined and elevating sort. Mr. Grote, his senior by twelve years, was perhaps the most intimate, as he was certainly the ablest, of all the friends whom Mr. Mill thus acquired.

Many of these friends were contributors to the original "Westminster Review," which was started by Bentham in 1824. Bentham himself and the elder Mill were its chief writers at first; and in 1828, if not sooner, the younger Mill joined the number. In that year he reviewed Whately's Logic; and it is probable that in the ensuing year he contributed numerous other articles. His first literary exploit, however, which he cared to reproduce in his "Dissertations and Discussions" was an article that appeared in "The Jurist," in 1833, entitled "Corporation and Church Property." That essay, in some respects, curiously anticipated the Irish Church legislation of nearly forty years later. In the same year he published, in "The Monthly Repository," a remarkably able and quite a different production, – "Poetry and its Varieties," showing that in the department of *belles-lettres* he could write with nearly as much vigor and originality as in the philosophical and political departments of thought to which, ostensibly, he was especially devoted. Shortly after that he embarked in a bolder literary venture. Differences having arisen concerning "The Westminster Review," a new quarterly journal – "The London Review" – was begun by Sir William Molesworth, with Mr. Mill for editor, in 1835. "The London" was next year

amalgamated with "The Westminster," and then the nominal if not the actual editorship passed into the hands of Mr. John Robertson. Mr. Mill continued, however, to be one of its most constant and able contributors until the Review passed into other hands in 1840. He aided much to make and maintain its reputation as the leading organ of bold thought on religious and social as well as political matters. Besides such remarkable essays as those on Civilization, on Armand Carrel, on Alfred de Vigny, on Bentham, and on Coleridge, which, with others, have been republished in his collection of minor writings, he contributed many of great importance. One on Mr. Tennyson, which was published in 1835, is especially noteworthy. Others referred more especially to the politics of the day. From one, which appeared in 1837, reviewing Albany Fonblanque's "England under Seven Administrations," and speaking generally in high terms of the politics of "The Examiner," we may extract a few sentences which define very clearly the political ground taken by Mr. Mill, Mr. Fonblanque, and those who had then come to be called Philosophical Radicals. "There are divers schools of Radicals," said Mr. Mill. "There are the historical Radicals, who demand popular institutions as the inheritance of Englishmen, transmitted to us from the Saxons or the barons of Runnymede. There are the metaphysical Radicals, who hold the principles of democracy, not as means to good government, but as corollaries from some unreal abstraction, – from 'natural liberty' or 'natural rights.' There are the radicals of occasion and circumstance,

who are radicals because they disapprove the measures of the government for the time being. There are, lastly, the Radicals of position, who are Radicals, as somebody said, because they are not lords. Those whom, in contradistinction to all these, we call Philosophical Radicals, are those who in politics observe the common manner of philosophers; that is, who, when they are discussing means, begin by considering the end, and, when they desire to produce effects, think of causes. These persons became Radicals because they saw immense practical evils existing in the government and social condition of this country, and because the same examination which showed them the evils showed also that the cause of those evils was the aristocratic principle in our government, – the subjection of the many to the control of a comparatively few, who had an interest, or fancied they had an interest, in perpetuating those evils. These inquirers looked still farther, and saw, that, in the present imperfect condition of human nature, nothing better than this self-preference was to be expected from a dominant few; that the interests of the many were sure to be in their eyes a secondary consideration to their own ease or emolument. Perceiving, therefore, that we are ill-governed, and perceiving that, so long as the aristocratic principle continued predominant in our government, we could not expect to be otherwise, these persons became Radicals; and the motto of their Radicalism was, Enmity to the aristocratical principle."

The period of Mr. Mill's most intimate connection with "The London and Westminster Review" forms a brilliant episode in

the history of journalism; and his relations, then and afterwards, with other men of letters and political writers, – some of them as famous as Mr. Carlyle and Coleridge, Charles Buller and Sir Henry Taylor, Sir William Molesworth, Sir John Bowring, and Mr. Roebuck, – yield tempting materials for even the most superficial biography; but we must pass them by for the present. And here we shall content ourselves with enumerating, in the order of their publication, those lengthier writings with which he chiefly occupied his leisure during the next quarter of a century; though that work was frequently diversified by important contributions to "The Edinburgh" and "The Westminster Review," "Fraser's Magazine," and other periodicals. His first great work was "A System of Logic," the result of many years' previous study, which appeared in 1843. That completed, he seems immediately to have paid chief attention to politico-economical questions. In 1844 appeared "Essays on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy," which were followed, in 1848, by the "Principles of Political Economy." After that there was a pause of ten years, though the works that were issued during the next six years show that he had not been idle during the interval. In 1857 were published two volumes of the "Dissertations and Discussions," consisting solely of printed articles, the famous essay "On Liberty," and the "Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform." "Considerations on Representative Government" appeared in 1861, "Utilitarianism," in 1863, "Auguste Comte and Positivism" and the "Examination

of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy," in 1865. After that, besides the very welcome "Inaugural Address" at St. Andrew's in 1867, his only work of importance was "The Subjection of Women," published in 1869. A fitting conclusion to his more serious literary labors appeared also in 1869 in his annotated edition of his father's "Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind."

When we remember how much and what varied knowledge is in those learned books, it is almost difficult to believe, that, during most of the years in which he was preparing them, Mr. Mill was also a hard worker in the India House, passing rapidly, and as the reward only of his assiduity and talent, from the drudgery of a junior clerk to a position involving all the responsibility, if not quite all the dignity, of a secretary of state. One of his most intimate friends, and the one who knew far more of him in this respect than any other, has in another column penned some reminiscences of his official life; but if all the state papers that he wrote, and all the correspondence that he carried on with Indian officials and the native potentates of the East, could be explored, more than one volume would have to be written in supplement to his father's great "History of British India."

Having retired from the India House in 1858, Mr. Mill went to spend the winter in Avignon, in the hope of improving the broken health of the wife to whom he was devotedly attached. He had not been married many years, but Mrs. Mill, who was

the widow of Mr. John Taylor, a London merchant, had been his friend since 1835, or even earlier. During more than twenty years he had been aided by her talents, and encouraged by her sympathy, in all the work he had undertaken, and to her rare merits he afterwards paid more than one tribute in terms that have no equal for the intensity of their language, and the depth of affection contained in them. Mrs. Mill's weak state of health seems to have hardly repressed her powers of intellect. By her was written the celebrated essay on "The Enfranchisement of Women" contributed to "The Westminster Review," and afterwards reprinted in the "Dissertations and Discussions," with a preface avowing, that by her Mr. Mill had been greatly assisted in all that he had written for some time previous. But the assistance was to end now. Mrs. Mill died at Avignon on the 3d of November, 1858, and over her grave was placed one of the most pathetic and eloquent epitaphs that have been ever penned. "Her great and loving heart, her noble soul, her clear, powerful, original, and comprehensive intellect," it was there written, "made her the guide and support, the instructor in wisdom, and the example in goodness, as she was the sole earthly delight, of those who had the happiness to belong to her. As earnest for all public good as she was generous and devoted to all who surrounded her, her influence has been felt in many of the greatest improvements of the age, and will be in those still to come. Were there even a few hearts and intellects like hers, this earth would already become the hoped-for heaven." Henceforth,

during the fourteen years and a half that were to elapse before he should be laid in the same grave, Avignon was the chosen haunt of Mr. Mill.

Passing much of his time in the modest house that he had bought, that he might be within sight of his wife's tomb, Mr. Mill was also frequently in London, whither he came especially to facilitate the new course of philosophical and political writing on which he entered. He found relief also in excursions, one of which was taken nearly every year, in company with his step-daughter, Miss Helen Taylor, into various parts of Europe. Italy, Switzerland, and many other districts, were explored, partly on foot, with a keen eye both to the natural features of the localities, especially in furtherance of those botanical studies to which Mr. Mill now returned with the ardor of his youth, and also to their social and political institutions. Perhaps the longest and most eventful of these excursions was taken in 1862 to Greece. On this occasion it had been proposed that his old friend, Mr. Grote, should accompany him. "To go through those scenes, and especially to go through them in your company," wrote Mr. Grote in January, "would be to me pre-eminently delightful; but, alas! my physical condition altogether forbids it. I could not possibly stay away from London, without the greatest discomfort, for so long a period as two months. Still less could I endure the fatigue of horse and foot exercise which an excursion in Greece must inevitably entail." The journey occupied more than two months; but in the autumn Mr. Mill was at Avignon; and,

returning to London in December, he spent Christmas week with Mr. Grote at his residence, Barrow Green, – Bentham's old house, and the one in which Mr. Mill had played himself when he was a child. "He is in good health and spirits," wrote Mr. Grote to Sir G.C. Lewis after that visit; "violent against the South in this American struggle; embracing heartily the extreme Abolitionist views, and thinking about little else in regard to the general question."

It was only to be expected that Mr. Mill would take much interest in the American civil war, and sympathize strongly with the Abolitionist party. His interest in politics had been keen, and his judgment on them had been remarkably sound all through life, as his early articles in "The Morning Chronicle" and "The London and Westminster Review," and his later contributions to various periodicals, helped to testify; but towards the close of his life the interest was perhaps keener, as the judgment was certainly more mellowed. It was not strange, therefore, that his admirers among the working classes, and the advanced radicals of all grades, should have urged him, and that, after some hesitation, he should have consented, to become a candidate for Westminster at the general election of 1865. That candidature will be long remembered as a notable example of the dignified way in which an honest man, and one who was as much a philosopher in practice as in theory, can do all that is needful, and avoid all that is unworthy, in an excited electioneering contest, and submit without injury to the insults of political opponents

and of political time-servers professing to be of his own way of thinking. The result of the election was a far greater honor to the electors who chose him than to the representative whom they chose; though that honor was greatly tarnished by Mr. Mill's rejection when he offered himself for re-election three years later.

This is hardly the place in which to review at much length Mr. Mill's parliamentary career, though it may be briefly referred to in evidence of the great and almost unlooked-for ability with which he adapted himself to the requirements of a philosophical politician as distinct from a political philosopher. His first speech in the House of Commons, delivered very soon after its assembling, was on the occasion of the second reading of the Cattle Diseases Bill, on the 14th of February, 1866, when he supported Mr. Bright in his opposition to the proposals of Mr. Lowe for compensation to their owners for the slaughter of such animals as were diseased or likely to spread infection. His complaint against the bill was succinctly stated in two sentences, which fairly illustrated the method and basis of all his arguments upon current politics. "It compensates," he said, "a class for the results of a calamity which is borne by the whole community. In justice, the farmers who have not suffered ought to compensate those who have; but the bill does what it ought not to have done, and leaves undone what it ought to have done, by not equalizing the incidence of the burden upon that class, inasmuch as, from the operation of the local principle adopted, that portion of an

agricultural community who have not suffered at all will not have to pay at all, and those who have suffered little will have to pay little; while those who have suffered most will have to pay a great deal." "An aristocracy," he added, in words that as truly indicate the way in which he subjected all matters of detail to the test of general principles of truth and expediency, – "an aristocracy should have the feelings of an aristocracy; and, inasmuch as they enjoy the highest honors and advantages, they ought to be willing to bear the first brunt of the inconveniences and evils which fall on the country generally. This is the ideal character of an aristocracy: it is the character with which all privileged classes are accustomed to credit themselves; though I am not aware of any aristocracy in history that has fulfilled those requirements."

That, and the later speeches that Mr. Mill delivered on the Cattle Diseases Bill, at once announced to the House of Commons and the public, if they needed any such announcement, the temper and spirit in which he was resolved to execute his legislative functions. The same spirit and temper appeared in the speech on the Habeas Corpus Suspension (Ireland) Bill, which he delivered on the 17th of February; but his full strength as a debater was first manifested during the discussion on Mr. Gladstone's Reform Bill of 1866, which was brought on for second reading on the 12th of April. His famous speech on that occasion, containing the most powerful arguments offered by any speaker in favor of the measure, and his shorter speech during its discussion on the 31st of May, need not here

be recapitulated. They were only admirable developments in practical debate of those principles of political science which he had already enforced in his published works. The other leading topics handled by Mr. Mill during the session of 1866 were the expediency of reducing the National Debt, which he urged on the occasion of Mr. Neate's proposal on the 17th of April; the Tenure and Improvement of Land (Ireland) Bill, on which he spoke at length and with force on the 17th of May, then practically initiating the movement in favor of land-reform, which he partly helped to enforce in part with regard to Ireland, and for the more complete adoption of which in England he labored to the last; the Jamaica outbreak, and the conduct of Governor Eyre, on which he spoke on the 31st of July; and the electoral disabilities of women, which he first brought within the range of practical politics by moving, on the 20th of July, for a return of the numbers of householders, and others who, "fulfilling the conditions of property or rental prescribed by law as the qualification for the electoral franchise, are excluded from the franchise by reason of their sex."

In the session of 1867 Mr. Mill took a prominent part in the discussions on the Metropolitan Poor Bill; and he spoke on various other topics, – his introduction of the Women's Electoral Disabilities Removal Bill being in some respects the most notable: but his chief action was with reference to Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill, several clauses of which he criticised and helped to alter in committee. Though he was as zealous as ever,

however, in his attendance to public business, he made fewer great speeches, being content to set a wise example to other and less able men in only speaking when he felt it absolutely necessary to do so, and in generally performing merely the functions of a "silent member."

In 1868 he was, if not more active, somewhat more prominent. On March the 6th, on the occasion of Mr. Shaw-Lefevre's motion respecting the "Alabama Claims," he forcibly expressed his opinions as to the wrong done by England to the United States during the civil war, and the need of making adequate reparation; and on the 12th of the same month he spoke with equal boldness on Mr. Maguire's motion for a committee to inquire into the state of Ireland, repeating anew and enforcing the views he had lately put forward in his pamphlet on Ireland, and considerably aiding by anticipation the passage of Mr. Gladstone's two great measures of Irish Reform. He took an important part in the discussion of the Election Petitions and Corrupt Practices Bill; and among a great number of other measures on which he spoke was the Married Women's Property Bill of Mr. Shaw-Lefevre.

Soon after that the House of Commons was dissolved, and Mr. Mill's too brief parliamentary career came to an end. The episode, however, had to some extent helped to quicken his always keen interest in political affairs. This was proved, among other ways, by the publication of his pamphlet on "England and Ireland" in 1868, and of his treatise "On the Subjection of Women" in 1869, as well as by the especial interest which

he continued to exhibit in two of the most important political movements of the day, – all the more important because they are yet almost in their infancy, – the one for the political enfranchisement of women, the other for a thorough reform of our system of land tenure. The latest proof of his zeal on the second of these important points appeared in the address which he delivered at Exeter Hall on the 18th of last March, and in two articles which he contributed to "The Examiner" at the commencement of the present year. We may be permitted to add that it was his intention to use some of the greater quiet that he expected to enjoy during his stay at Avignon in writing frequent articles on political affairs for publication in these columns. He died while his intellectual powers were as fresh as they had ever been, and when his political wisdom was only ripened by experience.

In this paper we purposely limit ourselves to a concise narrative of the leading events of Mr. Mill's life, and abstain as far as possible from any estimate of either the value or the extent of his work in philosophy, in economics, in politics, or in any other of the departments of thought and study to which, with such depth and breadth of mind, he applied himself; but it is impossible for us to lay down the pen without some slight reference, however inadequate it may be, to the nobility of his character, and the peculiar grace with which he exhibited it in all his dealings with his friends and with the whole community among whom he lived, and for whom he worked with the self-

sacrificing zeal of an apostle. If to labor fearlessly and ceaselessly for the good of society, and with the completest self-abnegation that is consistent with healthy individuality, be the true form of religion, Mr. Mill exhibited such genuine and profound religion – so permeating his whole life, and so engrossing his every action – as can hardly be looked for in any other man of this generation. Great as were his intellectual qualities, they were dwarfed by his moral excellences. He did not, it is true, aim at any fanciful ideal, or adopt any fantastic shibboleths. He was only a utilitarian. He believed in no inspiration but that of experience. He had no other creed or dogma or gospel than Bentham's axiom, – "The greatest happiness of the greatest number." But many will think that herein was the chief of all his claims to the honor of all men, and the best evidence of his worth. At any rate, he set a notable example of the way in which a man, making the best use in his power of merely his own reason and the accumulated reason of those who have gone before him, wisely exercising the faculties of which he finds himself possessed, and seeking no guidance or support from invisible beacons and intangible props, may lead a blameless life, and be one of the greatest benefactors of his race. No one who had any personal knowledge of him could fail to discern the singular purity of his character; and to those who knew him best that purity was most apparent. He may have blundered and stumbled in his pursuit of truth; but it was part of his belief that stumbling and blundering are necessary means towards the finding of truth, and

that honesty of purpose is the only indispensable requisite for the nearest approach towards truth of which each individual is capable. That belief rendered him as charitable towards others as he was modest concerning his own attainments. He never boasted; and he despised no one. The only things really hateful to him were arrogance and injustice, and for these he was, to say the least, as willing and eager to find excuse as could be the most devout utterer of the prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." We had noted many instances, coming within our own very limited observation, of his remarkable, almost unparalleled magnanimity and generosity; but such details would here be almost out of place, and they who need such will doubtless before long receive much more convincing proof of his moral excellence.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.